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140 Fly to Soviet to Start Citizen Exchange

By M. S. HANDLER

An experiment that may eventually involve an annual exchange of thousands of American and Soviet citizens began in the early hours yesterday.

A group of 140 Americans representing a cross-section of American society took a plane for Moscow to spend three weeks in the Soviet Union with their counterparts in their professions and trades.

The Soviet Union is expected to send a corresponding group to the United States this year and matching groups to follow each American contingent.

The first group of 140 was recruited and sent to Moscow by the Citizens Exchange Corps, a nonprofit, tax-exempt foundation that came into being under the name of Hostages For Peace.

The originator and organizer of the foundation is Stephen D. James, an advertising writer from the Bronx, who felt that only through knowing each other could the American and Soviet people avoid a disastrous collision.

Mr. James enlisted the approval of the White House and

**They Will Visit Three Weeks
With People in Their Trades
—Return Group Expected**

the State Department, and a number of distinguished citizens joined him in the enterprise, which involved prolonged negotiations.

Those who joined with Mr. James in building the organization included Melvin J. Gordon of Wellesley, Mass., chairman of the Sweets Company of America; the Rev. Robert L. Pierson, an Episcopal clergyman and son-in-law of Governor Rockefeller, and James B. Donovan, former president of the New York City Board of Education.

The group that departed yesterday included a university president, college professors, high school teachers and principals, industrialists, doctors, dentists, lawyers, morticians, farmers, machinists, housewives, clerical workers and students.

The travelers paid \$600 each for round-trip transportation

and three weeks' stay in the Soviet Union. The Soviet authorities have undertaken to arrange meetings between the Americans and Soviet citizens in the same occupations.

Barter Plan Is a Goal

Mr. Gordon said before the departure that should the exchange program evolve as planned, the exchanges would be made on a financial barter basis. Americans going to the Soviet Union would place dollars in escrow in the United States to be used to defray the expenses of Soviet visitors while the Soviet Government would handle the ruble expenditures of the Americans in the Soviet Union.

The ultimate goal is to organize American and Soviet groups of thousands to spend six or more months working at professions or trades in the other country.

The 140 members of the first group will be under the leadership of six volunteers including Mrs. Stephan D. James, wife of the plan's originator. Briefing sessions were held in the weeks before the departure.